

# National **Charter School** **Resource** Center

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## **Welcome to the Webinar!**

### **SEA Communities of Practice: Project Directors Discuss Their Lessons Learned**

We will be starting soon.

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The National Charter School Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement and administered by Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research, under contract number ED-04-CO-0109/0004.

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## SEA Communities of Practice: Project Directors Discuss Their Lessons Learned

January 19, 2011



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# About the Resource Center

The **U.S. Department of Education** is committed to promoting effective practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating the resources critical to ensuring the success of charter schools across the country. To that end, the Education Department, under a contract with Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research, has developed the **National Charter School Resource Center**.

# Presenters

## **Denise Mund**

Schools of Choice Director at the Colorado  
Department of Education

## **Cindy Murphy**

State Project Director at the Minnesota  
Department of Education

# Presenter

**Denise Mund**

Schools of Choice Director at the Colorado  
Department of Education

# Colorado Department of Education Charter School Program

*Successful Concepts and Components*

# Successful Concept

## *Listen to the Field*

- Survey user groups
- Develop training agendas based on suggestions
- Analyze data
- Recognize trends
- Visit schools (for more than just monitoring)
- Be flexible

# What does the concept “*Listen to the Field*” look like in action?

## Charter School Administrators

- Warning signs
  - High turnover
  - Isolated leadership
  - Pockets of success
  - Charter is a “small world”
- Opportunities
  - Successful leaders willing to share best practices
  - Experienced AND novice leaders looking for peers



# Evolving a Program of Support for Administrators

- Identified Administrators as a group needing support statewide
- Request for an Administrator's Handbook
- Established regional breakfast/lunch meetings
- Revealed a need for more 1-on-1 guidance
- Identified a mentoring group and established sub-grantee cohort of administrators
- Developed a library of resources
- Cohort for this year becomes next mentoring group

# Examples of Other Successful Components rooted in “*Listen to the Field*”

- For Boards: Board Training
  - Online Training Modules
  - Regional Training
  - Specialized, Special Topic Training
- For Authorizers : resource projects
  - Standard Application & Review Rubric
  - Model Contract Language & Samples
  - Renewal Framework
  - Closure Checklist

# Examples of Other Successful Concepts

- Use leaders from the field with demonstrated success
- Collaborate to develop resources
  - Charter schools
  - Colorado League of Charter Schools
  - Charter School Institute & other authorizers
  - Colo. Assn. of School Boards
- Model best practices and continuous improvement
- Be transparent

# Contact Information

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## Questions?



# Questions?



Raise your hand or enter your question in the chat box  
on the left side of your screen.

# Presenter

**Cindy Murphy**

State Project Director at the Minnesota  
Department of Education

# Minnesota's Federal CSP Grant Project

## Lessons Learned

Cindy Murphy

Federal CSP State Project Director

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- Collaboration across SEA is key
  - Cross-divisional collaboration is essential to effectively support and monitor developing and new charter schools
  - Learn, and respect, language and culture of other divisions
  - Ensure CSP is aligned with other SEA initiatives

 Clearly identify agency supports across SEA




- Compliance and confidence are key
    - Establish compliant grant management system or clean-up ineffective or noncompliant practices
    - Make grant processes as transparent as possible
    - Be consistent, fair and use data to back-up decisions
    - Address USDE monitoring findings ASAP
-  Showcase plans to address findings

- Don't hesitate to ask
  - Communicate with USDE if a grant administration change is being considered; check **before** making change
  - No internal assumptions; verify cross-agency consistency and uniformity
  - Ask SEA peers to share resources, samples, approved applications, etc.



Acknowledge what you've "borrowed" and learned

- Focus on high performance
    - Define expectations for high performance!
    - CSP grant management consistent with state law and approved SEA grant
    - Hold subgrantees to high standards **and** provide support and resources to help them succeed
    - Training and technical assistance critical to successful development of new schools
-  Weave throughout SEA application

# Questions?



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# Guiding Questions

- What advice for running a successful CSP program would you offer to new SEA CSP directors, recognizing that a successful program will look a bit different in each state?
- What strategies have worked well for you?
- What are some of the challenges you have faced and how did you overcome those challenges?

# Guiding Questions

- Which components of your program would you recommend that other SEA leaders consider including when they respond to the upcoming request for proposals?
- Are there program components that you included in past proposals that you would not include again or would reconceptualize in your upcoming proposal?
- What other lessons have you learned that will inform your future proposals?

# Thank you for participating.

- We look forward to your participation in future webinars hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center.
- This webinar will be archived at the following website:  
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars>
- Please share your feedback with us through the evaluation.